Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOREST POLICY IN TIMOR-LESTE

March 2019

SDGs:	
Countries:	Timor-Leste
Project Codes:	TCP/TIM/3601
FAO Contribution:	USD 295 000
Duration:	1 April 2016 – 31 October 2018
Contact Info:	FAO Representation in Timor-Leste FAO-TL@fao.org

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

Implementing Partner

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF).

Beneficiaries

Local communities, national and local (village and municipal level) government, national and subnational forest administration.

Country Programming Framework

Outcome 1.1: Strengthened coordination, planning, policy, legislation and regulatory frameworks for achievement of National Action Plan for a Hunger and Malnutrition Free Timor-Leste (PAN-HAM-TIL) goals.
Outcome 3.1: Enhanced management of natural resources to support crop management practices for intensification and diversification of smallholder farming systems, with special attention to underutilized crops.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on
"Strengthening National Forest Policy and Participatory Forest Management in Timor-Leste"
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BACKGROUND

Forests cover two-thirds of the land area of Timor-Leste. The majority of the population lives in the forested uplands, and their livelihoods depend on agriculture and forest products. In the last decade, forest area has decreased as a result of unsustainable management, reducing the ability of forest to provide livelihoods to rural people and ecological services, such as water regulation, protection of soils and climate-change mitigation and adaptation. The first ever National Forest Policy (NFP) was formulated with technical assistance from FAO, and enacted in 2007. In order to promote sustainable forest management for the benefit of local people, the Government of Timor-Leste requested that FAO assist in reviewing the NFP, and in formulating the Forest Law as a legal instrument for NFP implementation.

IMPACT

The strengthening of both policy and legal frameworks for sustainable management of forests and watersheds will provide a strong basis for environmental safeguards and sustainable natural resources management. The intended livelihood effects of community forestry (and the assumed potential of the large areas of forest to generate rural incomes and employment) will eventually contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 (Life on land) and SDG 1 (No poverty). SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) was addressed by enhancing the sustainability of fuelwood use and trade. If the potential of the forested area of Timor-Leste can be realized, as advocated in the revised NFP, rural incomes and employment will increase. SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) will be addressed by supporting the transition from unsustainable use to sustainable management, as per tried and tested community-based natural resource management and community forestry approaches. In addition, in terms of SDG 13 (Climate action), the sustainable management and utilization of forests will contribute to both adaptation and mitigation (the reduction of greenhouse gases).

Achievement of results

The NFP was reviewed and revised, based on effective and wide consultation with representatives from stakeholders at national, subnational and local levels. The revised NFP formed the basis for the development of the Law on the General Regime of Forests (promulgated in 2017), in which community forestry (CF) is recognized as the priority approach for the implementation of law and policy. Sixty-nine participants reviewed the revised NFP and the final draft of the Basic Forest Law, as well as the links between the two, and discussed needs and arrangements for the implementation of the revised policy and new law, including the development and implementation of a national community forestry action plan.

Key stakeholders in government and non-governmental organizations involved in forestry and participatory Natural Resources Management (NRM) development were consulted on the priorities and modalities for CF development in Timor-Leste. Lessons from Community-Based Natural Resources Management ([CBNRM] for watershed management), and the roles and capacities of government and service providers were assessed, as well as the plans for new projects in CF development. Based on the findings from the subnational and national consultations carried out, a National Community Forestry Strategy (2019-2030) was drafted.

Capacity for CF implementation was successfully enhanced during the project. This was achieved by identifying and training a pool of CF trainers on CF principles and approaches and community mobilization/facilitation skills, through Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions. The 20 ToT participants then trained 37 CF practitioners in three subnational courses.

Implementation of work plan

All activities were implemented on time, and within the planned budget, with the exception of Activity 3.3 (see Logframe Matrix). Additional resources were mobilized for the development of the Basic Forest Law, which was included in the project when the project document was at an advanced stage of development, at the urgent request of the Government.

The processes of multistakeholder consultation proved to be effective in dealing with the usual challenges encountered in forest policy in balancing conservation (biodiversity), protection of soil and water and production. The basis for compromise was the shared commitment to community participation in forestry among all stakeholders.

Initiatives related to the establishment of protected areas (for conservation), and the identification of priority watersheds (for protection) assisted in promoting acceptance to explore CF management and utilization (production).

Follow-up for government attention

It is recommended that further development of the CF programme be included in the National Community Forestry Strategy, with the active participation of all stakeholders, including arrangements for planning, implementation and monitoring.

Donor funding should be sought to implement follow-up actions to: i) ensure that all foresters and other stakeholders fully understand the law; and ii) develop subsidiary legislation and administrative guidelines, based on field experience from pilot projects in participatory forestry and natural resource management.

There are many CF activities related to reforestation and forest protection, while there are very few small-scale initial activities concerning CF management and utilization. In view of this, it is recommended that donor funding be sought to implement a field project to pilot and demonstrate the management and utilization of existing forest by communities for their own benefit.

It is also advised that the Government seek donor funding to implement field pilots and demonstrations on CF management and utilization, as a basis for the development of strategy in the national CF programme.

In addition, donor funding should be sought to implement longer-term ToTs and coaching of trainers, to improve the effectiveness of the training. Linkages with training initiated by other projects (such as CBNRM) should also be considered, to ensure that CF practitioners can practise/apply what they have learned.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The adoption of the Basic Forest Law by Parliament provides a foundation for the sustainability of the project outcomes, as it will support the mobilization of necessary amendments or replacements for changing the key principle of community participation in forestry and watershed management.

The new Government recently (September 2018) issued an instruction to create a new national directorate for CF development, as one of the four directorates in the well-established General Directorate of Forests, Coffee and Industrial Plants.

A strong partnership was formed with the JICA-supported CBNRM project, which has incorporated CF development in the CBNRM Road Map 2020-2030.

2. Gender equality

Both the revised policy and the new law include provisions emphasizing the need to address gender issues in the planning and implementation of policy and law.

3. Environmental sustainability

The goal of the NFP is sustainable management of forests and watershed areas for the benefit of the people of Timor-Leste. This goal and the six policy objectives related to it were adopted in the Law on the General Regime of Forests, which provides policy and management instruments for achieving the goal and the objectives.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The main issue related to rights addressed in the policy and the law is the recognition of customary rights and governance arrangements of forests. Land rights are under the jurisdiction of the Land Law (Ministry of Justice), which has some provisions for community property and community protection zones, for which regulations remain to be developed. Follow-up coordination with actors in the forestry sector will be needed, to ensure that the provisions related to customary rights on forest are reflected in the regulations for community property and community protection zones.

5. Technological sustainability

The policy and law provide direction and enabling provisions for building on local knowledge, capacity, resources and good practices. It is recommended that the Government seek donor funding to provide further technical assistance in developing CF, as demonstrated by the many projects implemented by development partners and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/service providers.

6. Economic sustainability

The CF development services are planned to be affordable by 2030; until that time, there is a need for considerable external investment in the development of the products and services, and in the institutional arrangements and capacity, in order to continue to provide them.

DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- Strengthening the national forest policy and participatory forest management in Timor-Leste. Report of the National Stakeholder Consultation Workshop. C. Veer. Dili, 15 June 2015. 17 pp.
- Assessment of the national forest policy. Report of three focus group discussions. M. Gusmao and C. Veer. Dili, May 2016. 28 pp.
- Assessment of the National Forest Sector Policy and draft Basic Forestry Law. Report of three Regional Workshops and Rapid Field Project Assessments. C. Veer and M. Gusmao. Bangkok and Dili, November 2016. 39 pp.
- Revised national forest policy Timor-Leste. Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (RDTL). Dili, February 2017. 32 pp.
- Draft Law No. 2017. General Regime of Forests. RDTL. Dili, 2017. 19 pp.
- Community Forestry and participatory approaches and Designing and delivering participatory training in forestry context. The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). Dili, 19-21 April and 24-26 April 2017. 29 pp.
- National Community Forestry Strategy 2018-2030. Revised Draft - 19 July 2018. RDTL. Dili, 2018. 31 pp.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Forest resources are managed in a sustainable manner for the benefit of people	
Outcome	Strengthened national forest policy by promoting nationwide implementation of community forestry	
	Indicators	1. Revised NFP. 2. National Action Plan for scaling up community forestry. 3. Capacity for CF implementation developed and demonstrated.
	Baseline	1. NFP (adopted in 2007). 2. Many CF initiatives in community-based forest protection and tree planting; very few in supporting communities to manage and utilize existing forest, covering half of the villagers' customary land area. Limited coordination of projects and NGO initiatives. 3. More experience and capacity in community-based forest protection and reforestation for watershed conservation; very limited experience and capacity in CF management and utilization.
	End Target	1. An agreed revised version of the NFP. 2. Capacity development for CF under wider range of conditions and geographical coverage. 3. Enhanced capacity for CF implementation.
	Comments	1. The revised policy formed the basis for the development of the law on the general regime of forest (promulgated in 2017), in which community forestry is recognized as the priority approach for the implementation of law and policy. It is recommended that further development of the CF programme be included in the National Community Forestry Strategy, with active participation of all stakeholders, including arrangements for planning, implementation and monitoring. 2. The National Community Forestry Strategy was developed and reviewed by all stakeholders, and adopted as a guideline for developing a national community forest programme. It is advised that pilots, demonstrations and documentation be carried out, to facilitate sustainable community management and the utilization of existing forests. 3. Capacity for CF implementation was enhanced through a ToT approach, with trainers able to continue to provide community forestry training in the future.

Output 1	Revised and agreed national forest policy documents		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	1. Revised NFP document reviewed and adopted by stakeholders in policy dialogue. 2. Policy priorities, objectives and strategies adopted in Law on the General Regime of Forests, promulgated in August 2017.	1. NFP reviewed and revised, based on effective and wide consultation of representatives from all stakeholders at national, subnational and local level. 2. Basic Forest Law prepared, based on outcomes from national policy consultations and additional consultations based on drafts of the law.	Yes
Baseline	1. NFP Statement of 2007. 2. Draft Forest Management Decree 2013.		
Comments	The revised national forest policy was achieved according to expectations, as there was widespread consensus about the goal and objectives of the policy. The alignment of the Basic Forest Law with the policy exceeded expected targets, as a result of the expertise provided by FAO and MAF.		
Activity 1.1	National inception workshop		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Sixty representatives from all stakeholder categories (government agencies, NGOs, development partners and academia) reviewed the project document and pledged their collaboration in the proposed activities.	

Activity 1.2	Assessment of implementation of the national forest policy	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	Six stakeholder consultations (three at national and three at subnational level), involving a total of 200 participants, were held to review national forest policy implementation. In addition, 20 key informants involved in participatory forestry initiatives were interviewed, and five participatory forestry projects in six sites were assessed through field observations and interviews with community members and representatives.
Activity 1.3	Public consultation on draft Forest Law	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	Two national consultations during the drafting of the law were complemented by the review and discussion of the proposed draft law during the three subnational policy consultations reported under Activity 1.2.
Activity 1.4	National policy dialogue	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	Sixty-nine participants (the majority of whom had been involved in earlier policy and law development activities) reviewed the revised national forest policy and the final draft of the Basic Forest Law, as well as the links between the two, and discussed needs and arrangements for the implementation of the revised policy and new law, including the development and implementation of a national community forestry action plan.

Output 2	National Community Forestry Action Plan		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	National action plan for scaling up community forestry	1. National Community Forestry Action Plan produced. 2. Nationwide and comprehensive implementation of CF development support.	1. Yes 2. Partially
Baseline	Pilots of community forestry at various locations (ad hoc)		
Comments	It became apparent that a community forestry strategy as the basis for a national CF programme would be more appropriate than an action plan, in view of the need to accommodate the many ongoing participatory NRM projects and initiatives, as well as the advanced drafting of a CBNRM road map (programme) for watershed management, based on a decade of documented field experience. It is recommended that fieldwork be carried out to demonstrate how to address a critical gap in the CF strategy (community management and utilization of existing forests, covering over half of the land area). With regard to the envisaged target, "Nationwide and comprehensive implementation of CF development support", there are many community forestry activities related to reforestation and forest protection, while there are very few small-scale initial activities related to CF management and utilization. In view of this, it is recommended that donor funding be sought to implement a field project to pilot and demonstrate the management and utilization of existing forest by communities for their own benefit.		

Activity 2.1	Subnational level assessment of the nationwide potential of community forestry	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	Lessons and plans from four field projects were assessed, as well as the activities from two municipal forest offices. Most CF development support was provided by project staff, with limited involvement of municipal foresters. Interviews were carried out with community members and representatives in field project sites, chainsaw operators, fuelwood and timber traders; as well as with carpenters and furniture makers. A more comprehensive and systematic assessment of markets and enterprises is needed, to validate the impression of growing market and enterprise development.
Activity 2.2	National-level stakeholders consultation	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	Key stakeholders in government and non-governmental organizations involved in forestry and participatory NRM development were consulted on the priorities and modalities for CF development in Timor-Leste. Lessons from CBNRM (for watershed management), and the roles and capacities of government and service providers (NGOs) were assessed, as well as the plans for new projects in CF development. Based on the findings from the subnational and national consultations, a National Community Forestry Strategy (2019-2030) was drafted.

Activity 2.3	Public consultation on National Community Forestry Action Plan		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The draft National Community Forestry Strategy was shared in a three-day workshop (including field trip), jointly organized with the JICA-CBNRM project presenting the CBNRM Road Map for Watershed Management, with 150 participants from national and subnational level. It is recommended that donor funding be sought to implement field pilots and demonstrations on CF management and utilization, as a basis for the development of strategy in the national CF programme.	
Output 3	Targeted capacity building for community forestry successfully implemented		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of CF trainers and trained CF practitioners	At least ten trainers and 20 CF practitioners	Yes
Baseline	Few trainers with experience in participatory training approaches		
Comments	Twenty trainers were trained through ToT sessions, who went on to train 37 CF practitioners in three subnational training courses. It is advised that funding be sought to implement longer-term training of trainers and coaching of trainers to improve the effectiveness of the training.		
Activity 3.1	Training of Trainers (ToT) on designing and supporting community forestry		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The ToT was successfully completed, particularly in view of the limited (three-day) duration of the course. The follow-up training provided to practitioners demonstrated the need for longer-term ToT, and enhanced preparation of training courses and materials. It is advised that donor funding be sought to provide longer-term training to instil participatory approaches; and coaching in preparation for training courses should be considered. Linkages with training initiated by other projects (such as CBNRM) should also be considered to ensure that CF practitioners can practice/apply what they have learned.	
Activity 3.2	Exposure visits for government officials to countries successful in implementing community forestry		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The visit to Nepal was highly successful and yielded insights, as reported by officials in the workshop and other conversations. The visit to Viet Nam was less successful, because of logistical problems and fewer relevant examples of community forestry visited.	
Activity 3.3	Final Workshop		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	There were not sufficient remaining funds to carry out this activity.	

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